

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJECT: BOURASSA REFUSES REPATRIATION OF CONSTITUTION WITHOUT
NEW DIVISION OF POWERS.

REF: QUEBEC 91, 90, OTTAWA 1557

1. IN CLOSING REMARKS TO LIBERAL PARTY OF QUEBEC CONVENTION
HELD QUEBEC CITY APRIL 23-25, PREMIER BOURASSA SAID QUEBEC
WOULD NOT AGREE TO ANY REPATRIATION OF THE CONSTITUTION FROM
LONDON WITHOUT AN AGREEMENT WITH OTTAWA ON A SET OF " SOLID
GUARANTEES " - TO BE ADDED TO THE CONSTITUTION AS AMENDMENTS
- OF ITS CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY AND A NEWDIVISION OF FISCAL
AND SPENDING POWERS WITH OTTAWA. BOURASSA S STANCE WAS BOL-
TERED BY A RESOLUTION PASSED EARLIER IN THE DAY BY CONVENTION
DELEGATES DEMANDING PROVINCIAL AUTHORITY IN COMMUNICATIONS
AND IMMIGRATION, READJUSTMENT OF FISCAL AND SPENDING POWERS,
AND LOWERING TO 20 PERCENT THE PERCENTAGE OF THE NATIONAL
POPULATION IN A PROVINCE NECESSARY TO GIVE IT VETO POWER
(THIS REFLECTS QUEBEC FEAR PROVINCE POPULATION FALLING BELOW
25 PERCENT SOMETIMES MENTIONED AS LIMIT).

2. BOURASSA CRITICIZED TRUDEAU FOR OVER-SIMPLIFYING CONSTI-
TUTIONAL DEBATE. HE ALSO CHARACTERIZED AS EXAGGERATION
TRUDEAU S ARGUMENT BNA ACT MEANT THAT BRITISH HAD POWER TO
MAKE LAWS FOR CANADIANS. HE RESTATED PREVIOUS POSITION THAT
REPATRIATION WAS ONE OF LAST MEANS FOR QUEBEC TO PROTECT ITS
CULTURAL HERITAGE. BOURASSA ADDED THAT HECOULD NOT ACCEPT THE
SLOW EXTINCTION OF QUEBEC S FRANCOPHONE POPULATION (AS QUEBEC
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PERCEIVES HAPPENING TO FRANCOPHONES ELSEWHERE IN CANADA).

BOURASSA SAID THAT COMPLETE DETAILS OF THE PROVINCE'S DEMANDS IN RETURN FOR ITS ACCORD ON REPATRIATION WOULD BE MADE KNOWN IN SEVERAL MONTHS, AFTER THE PROVINCIAL PREMIERS' CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST.

3. IN ADDITION TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE, BOURASSA CITED NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC SECTOR (SEE QUEBEC 91) AND THE FINANCING OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES AS IMMEDIATE TASKS REMAINING TO BE ACCOMPLISHED. HE STATED THAT OTTAWA SHOULD RECONSIDER ITS REFUSAL TO SHARE IN THE FINANCING OF THE OLYMPICS AS OTTAWA'S OWN PROJECTS WERE NOT IMMUNE TO ASTRONOMICAL COST OVERRUNS.

4. LIBERAL PARTY ELECTED QUEBEC PUBLIC RELATIONS EXECUTIVE BENOIT PAYEUR AS ITS NEW PRESIDENT (SEE A-5 OF 2/5/75). PAYEUR IS AN ORGANISER EXPECTED TO PUT PARTY ON ELECTORAL FOOTING FOR 1977. IN HIS FIRST SPEECH, PAYEUR WARNED THE PARTY AGAINST TAKING FOR GRANTED THE SUPPORT OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING VOTERS IN QUEBEC.

5. COMMENT: BOURASSA DELIVERED SECOND ANIMATED AND EMOTIONAL SPEECH IN THREE DAYS IN WHAT MANY CONSIDERED HIS REPLY TO TRUDEAU'S MARCH 5 ATTACK ON HIM MADE FROM SAME PODIUM. BOURASSA GENERALLY REFRAINED FROM PERSONAL ATTACKS ON TRUDEAU BUT CAME DOWN HARD ON PM'S CONSTITUTIONAL VIEWS. HE ALSO ATTACKED QUEBEC LABOR LEADERS AND THE PARTI QUEBECOIS FOR IRRESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION. BOURASSA APPEARS TO HAVE EMERGED FROM THIS CONGRESS STILL IN FIRM CONTROL OF THE PARTY. RESOLUTIONS ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND OLYMPIC ISSUES WERE PASSED OR NOT PASSED AS THE PARTY LEADERS DICTATED. NO VISIBLE CHALLENGE WAS MADE TO BOURASSA'S LEADERSHIP.
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